

POSITION PAINT
INITIAL MEETING OF THE
UN COMMITTEE ON THE PEACEFUL
USES OF OUTER SPACE

Approved For Release 2001/08/27 : CIA-RDP66R00638R000100150084-5

CONFIDENTIAL
March 14, 1962

ANNEX H

UN REGISTRY OF SPACE LAUNCHINGS

(To be used only on foreign initiative)

BACKGROUND AND POSSIBLE FOREIGN POSITION

1. UN General Assembly Resolution 1721 (XVI), which was initiated by the U.S., calls upon states launching objects into orbit or beyond to furnish information promptly to the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, through the Secretary-General, for the registration of launchings. The Resolution does not specify the precise information to be furnished or the procedures by which this reporting was to be accomplished. The US has submitted its first report (which contained a chronological census of all US space vehicles and associated objects in sustained orbit or space transit as of February 15, 1962) and will submit subsequent reports on a bi-weekly basis to keep that information up to date. To date no other state has furnished such information to the Secretary-General in compliance with that Resolution.

2. During the meeting of the Outer Space Committee questions may be raised as to the adequacy of the information contained in the US report or the bases on which the US has selected this type of report and procedure for its submittal. There may be some expressions of disappointment or criticism that the US report is "so meager" or "that it may not cover all US launchings." The Delegation should attempt to avoid any detailed discussion, but may, if necessary, use the facts presented herein in responding to such questions or criticism.

THE US POSITION

3. The US reports include all US objects in sustained orbit or space transit as of the dates of the initial report and subsequent bi-weekly follow-up reports. It identifies those objects by their international designation, the conventional designation of the main vehicle involved in their launching, the general category (or purpose) of the satellites or objects in orbit, the date of their launch and their inclination, nodal period, apogee and perigee.

4. The procedure adopted for submitting these reports was intended to assure an orderly, simple and complete registration which would be most manageable from the viewpoint of both the submitting State and the UN Secretariat. In this connection it may be noted that the manner in which the Secretary General and the Outer Space Committee will use this information remains to be determined through discussion and experience by all parties concerned. The value of the registry will, of course, depend upon the receipt of similar information from all states which place objects into orbit or escape trajectories.

/5. This

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5. This procedure may be questioned as implying that the US does not plan to report all orbital vehicles, e.g.: those which may not have achieved a sustained orbit (objects making only a few passes, but not remaining in orbit). In working out this procedure we had in mind the conclusion, contained in the 1959 Report of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, that "a regular census of satellites which are circling the earth must be maintained." It seemed reasonable to suppose that, if a space vehicle should not achieve a sustained orbit, its inclusion would not be of value for this purpose. In any case the procedure is subject to change in the light of further experience. Attention could be called to the extensive character of the first U.S. report. The Delegation should not attempt to define "sustained orbit".

6. The US continues to supply more detailed information concerning spacecraft of special interest, such as frequencies in use and particulars as to the experiments involved, to COSPAR and directly to states which are participating with the US in specific cooperative space activities. This information is available through COSPAR.

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